really cannot conceive how his place can be supplied, in any degree whatever, by all the science of fifty centuries, all the gold of England, all the brass of engineerdom, or all three together. And so common sense seems to me to suggest that a decorative work would be more creditably let alone altogether than attempted to be groped out in the dark, by the hap-hazard way the venerable Archdeacon proposes. Nor can I yet believe the pride of this city and nation will readily stoop to such an attempt.

If, however, the "restoration" of Sir James Thornhill's work be a thing settled, of course so is the decoration as a whole. It is removed from the sphere of art into that of mechanism. The Dean and Chapter cannot surely, in this age of machines—dead and alive, expect real artists to *become* machines for them. If the work of apprentices or of monkeys be what is wanted, apprentices or monkeys must do it; and they can be readily had without sending to China, and without insulting respectable artists.

But in case the matter should remain open, I cannot refrain from a comment on the extreme singularity of the only reason yet given for this "restoration," that the works "are too far from the eye to challenge minute criticism." I thought this was the very reason of their uselessness, that they *are* too far off to get that minute criticism which alone could discover their *beauties* (which, I doubt not, are numerous: the painter's name guarantees it), and yet near enough to display all their *baseness*, whether looked for or not. Work out of place is all the worse for being beautiful or valuable—so much the greater waste. If they had no beauties, or called for no minute criticism, they would be all the less wrong and less deplorable; but it is the double mischance of these (as of most other chance decoration, and all chance architecture,—most things under your everlasting microscope system of odds and ends, your pin's-head-maker and pin's-point-maker division of labour) that, for want of an architect, *all* their beauties are where they might as well be, at the bottom of the sea, and *all* their faults blazoned on the sky. We can get neither the light nor our eyes near enough to make out one beauty of the painting proper, but the glaring baseness and absurdity of what stands for decoration would be conspicuous a mile off. Nobody, critic or not, can see the half that is a great man's work, and supposed to be beautiful, while everybody, critic or rustic, can see all that he *does* see is shabby makeshift and arrant nonsense, such as he may remember, before it was exploded, in third-rate theatres, or possibly may yet linger in its last refuge, those conjuring-shows that confine their rambles to third-rate fairs.

But let Malachi's test decide—"*Offer it now unto thy governor.*" Let us propose to the lord mayor, or any to the bishop, to decorate his lordship's dwelling—his own, not his official dwelling,—that dwelling for the taste of which he is personally credited, in the manner of the visible part of Thornhill's work. At any rate, get *some one* to accept and own it at home. If no one thinks it worth imitating, how can it be worth restoring?

But, says one of your correspondents, with regard to mimic coffers (why not to pilasters and all other mimic architecture, I cannot tell)—they are "a harmless sham" (a noble defence this, by the bye, for all costly and unsatisfactory works to the chief temple of a great nation. It was a great pity that Pericles, for instance, was not advised of this plea,—"only a harmless sham"). But let us see. He calls them "a sham," I suppose, because they may pass for features of the masonry, which they are not. Well, no one since Reeson thinks *this* untruth will do any harm. On this ground I readily acquit these and all other shams. You may cover the vaults of any cathedral, like those of Milan, and London dome, with sham coffer tracery,—the walls with sham pilasters in sham marble (if you have nothing better to do)—the woodwork with sham panels in sham oak, the metalwork with sham rivets and nuts (why not) in sham brass,—the roofs with sham chimney-cowls in sham zinc—the windows with sham crystal palaces in sham crystal,—and the churchyard with sham tombs in sham stone. But do not flatter yourself you have done the cathedral any harm, or made me like it a bit the less. I do not even *see* your work unless I look for it. I can admire without knowing it is there. Do you think I care a dump for sham *coffers* or sham *marble*, as such. Oh no, but I care for the sham *art*, the sham *work* they show,—the story they tell of some one obtaining the pay of an inventor and an artist without exerting invention or art,—the encouragement they give every spectator to do the same,—the years of human life they waste in labour for naught,—the hundred honest hands they employ only to enable one impostor to live on his neighbour's follies,—the confusion of right and wrong they create,—the good service they do their prince,—the blood they drink up, the stomachs they starve, and the graves they fill. *These* are the things I object to in your "harmless shams,"—and let their defender mark this,—it is best to get out of a falling house. One by one these things will fall, and those whose toes are not out of the way will know, as each falls, how "harmless" it is.

But the question, as regards church ornament, assumes a far graver aspect. It is not merely or chiefly a question between real or sham work. It is put in a far more comprehensive form by Ruskin's invaluable argument on the "material of ornament," (one that will have just the same effect, observe, whether architects accept or reject it: let them not think its success will depend in the smallest degree on *them*). The question is, whether man's work or God's shall, in the house of praise, be made the subject of ornament, *i. e.* the *subject of praise*;—whether the order of nature or the five orders of Vignola are most to be extolled;—whether this earth does or does not contain anything more worth painting than Corinthian pilasters;—whether the choir audible and the choir visible shall be in unison, or one shall sing "The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure therein;" and the other answer, "Palladio's work is worthy to be praised and had in honour: *he* hath so done his marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance."

Well, however this may be settled, I assume that the dome will contain something thought worth looking at. Now, before deciding what this may be, we must have the means of seeing it,—light. First, let there be light, and then the things to be lighted. Without this, it is vain to talk of making it "glorious with gilding." Can your gold shine in the dark?

Again, if the dome be the chief ornament, or to contain the chief, it must have the chief light. It is the nature of light to attract the eye, and of shade to repel it; and this puts it in the power of an architect to make you view the various features of one prospect in any order he pleases; the most lighted being always looked at first and most; the darkest always seen last and least. So the wisdom of this cathedral's last directors took care we should look most at chequered casements, and least at Wren's dome and Thornhill's painting,—most at the building's extremities, to show us how near they are, and least at the middle distance, to hide how much separates end from end,—most at the vestibules and approaches (as they must eventually be), and least at the temple's body, which must be the oratory when it is used. All this I take the liberty to propose reversing, by the following means:—

First, we have to throw on the concavity of the dome all the light that can possibly be got there (for it cannot be too much from those few windows above and below,—hardly even enough); and, secondly, to darken (by colour or otherwise) the other windows throughout the building, especially in its *outer* walls and towards its extremities, sufficiently to render its four arms always darker than the central space, and their aisles darker still—the exact reverse of the relations between the lighting of all these parts at present. Now the former can only be effected by reflection from silvered glass, which must be applied in the three places I have shown in the section enclosed, but which may be explained without its aid thus:—

1st. The twenty-four windows of the rotunda below the dome will each require three, four, or five appendages of the form of luffer-boards, light frames of metal, nearly horizontal, but slanting outward, extending to the outer plane of the wall, and inward at least as far as the pilasters project (how to decorate them I will tell you presently). The first in each window will lie on the sill, and the places of the others be determined by lines so drawn that a spectator at the furthest spot of the floor may have the near edge of each luffer just hiding the farther edge of the next above it, or may see no sky, which will give their intervals a graceful increase upwards, and make their numbers in the east and west triplets five, in the north and south four, and in the diagonal triplets three only—ninety in all. Their upper sides being covered with silvered glass (about 24 feet on each) will reflect up to the dome the whole of the light these windows now send straight down to the spectator's eye to dazzle and render it unfit to see the dome. He will still, observe, receive this light *eventually*, but in a diffused radiance from the whole illumined and decorated concave, instead of in winding partial glares from the square casements. It will be scattered from the dome to the floor, instead of, as now, from the floor to the dome. Their degrees of illumination will be just exchanged, as far as *this* light is concerned; but of course the floor has light also from other windows, and from those above the dome's eye.

2nd. But a considerable further quantity may be had from these eight windows above the dome's eye, not indeed by diverting that *small* part of their light (about a tenth) which falls now through the eye, but nearly all the remaining *nine-tenths*, now entirely wasted in the space between the inner dome and cone, totally useless either to the interior or the staircases. This space, never entered but by workmen, is actually the best lighted in the whole building. Well, to economise this light, suspend by tension rods (hanging through the upper tier of holes in the cone) a barrel-shaped light framing of wood or metal, fitting at bottom (but not necessarily resting on) the edges of the 24 feet eye, and rising to within 3 feet of the sills of the eight windows in the cone. The section of its sides must be each a portion of an ellipse, that has one focus at the sill of the opposite window above, and the other at the opposite under edge of the dome's eye below. (But a circular arc of 44 feet radius is near enough to serve in practice.) Line this barrel-shaped surface (about 3,700 feet) with silvered glass, and the whole of the light it receives will, on a single reflection, be thrown through the dome's eye, near its edges (crossing there), and fall evenly spread down the concavity, to the cornice, and no lower. Every ray of this light will meet the surface very obliquely, but every one of the former supply almost normally: one being the best light for displaying *polished*, the other the best for *dead* surfaces; so that both kinds of material may mix their full effects in the decoration.

3rd. Eight more reflecting planes, about 7 feet square, constructed like cucumber frames, and placed outside these cone windows, sloping from their sill up to the top of each sunk area, will reflect into these windows the light now spent in those areas. But only a portion of this will fall into the barrel, and what passes above its edges, or less than 3 feet below the window sills, cannot be turned to account by any means I can think of. Still the portion used will be worth the reflectors.

I need hardly add, that a great deal of light is lost by the extreme badness of the present glass, and that in replacing this by rough or roughened plate of good colour, all direct sunbeams will be scattered like daylight at their very entrance (which is quite necessary) and this *without loss*. Whereas the very extravagant proposal of Mr. Parris to effect this *by colour*, in the rotunda windows, would simply render the dome *totally black and impervious*, so that it might as well at once be an engine-house roof; and the space under it, still darker than at present, will be a sort of tunnel in the middle of the building, bringing its ends as apparently near as those of a tunnel.

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